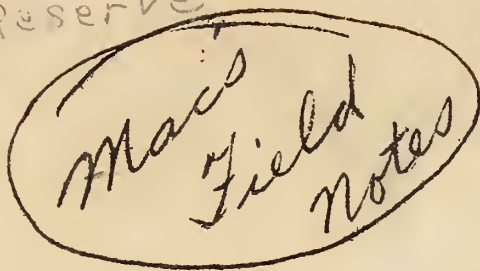


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1944
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Reserve



U. S. Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Division of Agricultural Statistics
Mississippi



Number 1

RURAL CARRIER ACREAGE SURVEYS

P R E F A C E

(Or excuse for perpetrating this)

In various ways I often pick up ideas about our work that have been found helpful in different field offices. Many of these are well worth passing on and I have done this whenever I could. My ramblings are somewhat limited though, so for some time I have been incubating the idea of starting some kind of vehicle for circulating these field office ideas.

I claim no credit for any of the ideas and can't always tell where credit is due --- I'll pin it on whenever I can, though, and shall welcome any suggestions that anyone will send me. And I mean anyone --- not just the "bosses". Whenever any of the clerks, stenographers, messengers, or water boys have ideas that make their work easier, better, or faster, I want them to send them to me. Just break down and tell everything --- well, at least everything pertaining to the idea. We are working on the same problems and none of us know all the answers, so pass on any you get for the good of the organization.

I didn't know just what to call this little publication. Not that it makes much difference, but it seems customary to use some name at the top --- even if it is needed only as a target. Some of you may feel that other titles would be more appropriate, such as "Mac's Meddlesome Mutterings" or "DAM'S Dumb Doings" but that will be O.K. with me. Names don't mean much anyhow. In Mississippi skunks are called polecats but that doesn't change their perfume. So I decided to just call this "Mac's Field Notes" and let it go at that. That won't lead anybody to expect too much, or cause confusion with other publications. Other issues will be forthcoming from time to time as occasion permits, and ideas accumulate. I hope they will be helpful to both clerical and professional workers, and I shall try to put enough "meat" in every issue so that you will want to keep a complete file for reference.

The main topic I want to discuss in this issue is:

RURAL CARRIER ACREAGE SURVEYS

SUMMARY

- I Getting representative distribution:
 - (a) It pays to establish a definite quota for each county, whether cards are to be distributed by carriers or mailed direct.
 - (b) After establishing county quotas decide how many cards to send to different routes, and to postmasters where there are no routes.
 - (c) Direct mailings to individual farmers may have to be resorted to, especially where routes are scarce.
- II Getting high percent return:
 - (a) Preliminary letters to postmasters giving last year's record of returns, by routes in the county.
 - (b) Letter to accompany cards; also listing sheets for carriers, preferably carrying names of patrons reporting the previous year, with suitable letter to carriers.
 - (c) Reminder slips a week or so later, for use of carriers in making "follow-up".
 - (d) Final "clean up" letter to postmasters.
 - (e) Direct mail follow up by Statistician.
- III Speeding up the work:
 - (a) Eliminate the duplicate reports.
 - (b) Train clerks to help edit.
 - (c) Arrange cards systematically.
 - (d) List efficiently.

(Detailed discussion of these and other points will be found following the charts.)

The increasing demands for county estimates compel us to get all the acreage information we can. On the other hand there is a limit to the amount of work we can do with the available personnel. So we are faced with the need for (1) getting a well distributed sample, (2) of ample size, and (3) eliminating lost motion so that the work can be handled by a limited organization. It is a big and challenging task but it is being done in fine shape in a lot of our offices.

The enclosed charts comparing the 1938 Rural Carrier Acreage Survey with 1937 show generally marked improvement last year. Many States received increased returns and the total for the United States was increased nearly 20 percent with only about 5 percent increase in total cost. In some States the cost was actually less in 1938 than in 1937, even with increased numbers of cards listed.

A careful study of these charts is well worth while. I shall not pick out all the high lights but I believe everyone in each office will find it interesting to compare the record of their own State with other similar States.

RURAL CARRIER ACREAGE SURVEY
1938 Compared with 1937

(I = 1938; +++ = increases, 1938 over 1937; --- = decreases, 1938 from 1937)

	Larger % Return	Lower Cost	PERCENT RETURN				COST PER SCHEDULE LISTED									
			1938	10	20	30	40	1938	.05	.10	.15	.20	.30	.40	.50	.60
N. Eng.	*	*	27					13		---						
N. Y.	*	*	31			+		13		---						
N. J.	*	*	20					17		---						
Pa.	*	*	38			+		12								
Ohio		*	32		---			9		---						
Ind.		*	41		---			19			+					
Ill.		*	38					21								
Mich.	*	*	43			+		15		---						
Wis.	*	*	33					13								
Minn.	*	*	34			+		16								
Iowa	*	*	32			+		5		---						
Mo.		*	21		---			15		---						
N. Dak.	*	*	38			+		16		---						
S. Dak.		*	29		---			16		---						
Nebr.	*	*	40			+		14		+						
Kans.		*	26		---			28			+					
Del.-Md.	*	*	16		---			42			+					
Va.	*	*	30			+		21								
W. Va.	*	*	25			+		16		---						
N. C.	*	*	32			+		22		---						
S. C.	*	*	26			+		20			+					
Ga.		*	22		---			19								
Fla.	*	*	18			+		53			---					
Ky.	*	*	18			+		12		---						
Tenn.	*	*	42			+		14			+					
Ala.	*	*	39			+		16		---						
Miss.	*	*	38			+		8		---						
Ark.		*	23		---			23		---						
La.	*	*	30			+		29		---						
Okla.	*	*	41			+		14		---						
Texas	*	*	26			+		23		---						
Mont.	*	*	19			+		35		---						
Idaho	*	*	16					21		---						
Wyo.	*	*	16			+		42		---						
Colo.		*	18					23			+					
N. Mex. 1/		*	20					110								→
Ariz. 2/	*	*	20			+		86								→
Utah-Nev.	*	*	13					55		---						
Wash.-Ore.	*	*	40			+		30			+					
Calif.	*	*	19			+		23		---						
U. S.			29			+		17		---						

1/ The cost per schedule listed in New Mexico increased from 91¢ to \$1.10.

2/ The cost per schedule listed in Arizona decreased from 95¢ to 86¢.

RURAL CARRIER ACREAGE SURVEY
1938 Compared with 1937

(I = 1938; +++ = increases, 1938 over 1937; --- = decreases, 1938 from 1937)

	Lower Cost	More Listed	TOTAL COST 1/				TOTAL NUMBER LISTED						
			1938	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	1938	2,500	5,000	7,500	10,000	12,500
N. Eng.	*	*	908	-----H-				7,173	-----H				
N. Y.	*	*	776	-----H-				5,929	-----H				
N. J.	*	*	377	-----H-				2,213	-----H				
Pa.	*	*	1,008	-----H				8,385	-----H				
Ohio	*	*	1,162	-----H--				13,650	-----H				
Ind.			1,382	-----H				7,239	-----H				
Ill.			2,088	-----H				10,161	-----H				
Mich.	*	*	1,334	-----H---				9,080	-----H				
Wis.	*	*	748	-----H				5,638	-----H				
Minn.	*	*	969	-----H				6,013	-----H				
Iowa	*	*	633	-----H				11,622	-----H				
Mo.	*	*	845	-----H---				5,795	-----H				
N. Dak.	*	*	872	-----H				5,287	-----H				
S. Dak	*	*	1,050	-----H				6,433	-----H				
Nebr.	*	*	989	-----H				6,978	-----H				
Kans.			1,449	-----H				5,241	-----H				
Del.-Md.			905	-----H				2,135	-----H				
Va.	*	*	692	-----H				3,246	-----H				
W. Va.	*	*	737	-----H				4,512	-----H				
N. C.	*	*	1,506	-----H				6,842	-----H				
S. C.	*	*	605	-----H				3,079	-----H				
Ga.	*	*	846	-----H				4,525	-----H				
Fla.	*	*	410	-----H				773	-----H				
Ky.	*	*	601	-----H				5,171	-----H				
Tenn.	*	*	868	-----H				6,083	-----H				
Ala.	*	*	663	-----H				4,123	-----H				
Miss.	*	*	505	-----H				6,639	-----H				
Ark.	*	*	821	-----H				3,522	-----H				
La.	*	*	676	-----H				2,300	-----H				
Okla.	*	*	1,098	-----H				8,063	-----H				
Texas	*	*	2,442	-----H				10,445	-----H				
Mont.	*	*	789	-----H				2,235	-----H				
Idaho	*	*	678	-----H				3,242	-----H				
Wyo.	*	*	617	-----H				1,469	-----H				
Colo.	*	*	569	-----H				2,440	-----H				
N. Mex.	*	*	462	-----H				421	-----H				
Ariz.	*	*	424	-----H				491	-----H				
Utah-Nev.	*	*	510	-----H				925	-----H				
Wash.-Ore.	*	*	1,225	-----H				4,091	-----H				
Calif.	*	*	638	-----H				2,816	-----H				
			1938	1937				1938	1937				
U. S. Totals			\$35,877	\$34,181				206,425	172,802				

^{1/} The amount expended on acreage during October and November, excluding travel and other expenses.

RURAL CARRIER ACREAGE SURVEY
1938 Compared with 1937

(I= 1938; +++ = increases, 1938 over 1937; -- = decreases, 1938 from 1937)

	More per 1000	More Identicals	SCHEDULES LISTED PER 1,000 FARMS 1/								NUMBER OF IDENTICALS								
			1938	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	1938	1,000	2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000	6,000	7,000
N. Eng.		*	45									4,778		+					
N. Y.	*	*	33									2,256		+					
N. J.	*	*	75									1,418		+					
Pa.	*	*	44									4,316		+					
Ohio		*	53									7,176		+					
Ind.		*	36									2,321		+					
Ill.		*	44									3,369		+					
Mich.	*	*	46									3,829		+					
Wis. 2/	*	*	28									1,415							
Minn.	*	*	30									1,792		+					
Iowa 3/	*	*	52									3/							
Mo.		*	21									1,216							
N. Dak.	*	*	62									2,942		+					
S. Dak.	*	*	77									2,232		+					
Nebr.	*	*	52									2,244							
Kans.		*	30									1,889							
Del.-Md.		*	40									1,225							
Va.	*	*	17									1,011							
W. Va.	*	*	43									1,502		+					
N. C.	*	*	25									2,305		+					
S. C.	*	*	23									1,468		+					
Ga.	*	*	21									1,859							
Fla.	*	*	11									340							
Ky.	*	*	19									2,261		+					
Tenn.	*	*	24									1,793		+					
Ala.	*	*	17									1,213		+					
Miss.	*	*	32									2,423		+					
Ark.	*	*	17									1,904							
La.	*	*	17									1,269		+					
Okla.	*	*	38									2,450		+					
Texas	*	*	22									3,799		+					
Mont.	*	*	44									1,079							
Idaho	*	*	72									1,558		+					
Wyo.		*	84									871		+					
Colo.		*	38									905							
N. Mex. 4/	*	*	10									101	4/						
Ariz. 5/	*	*	26									158	5/						
Utah-Nev.		*	27									485							
Wash.-Ore.		*	27									2,416							
Calif.	*	*	19									935		+					
U. S.			32									1938 77,108 6/					1937 70,889 6/		

1/ Excluding negro croppers. 2/ Wisconsin did not tabulate identicals in 1937.
3/ No report received from Iowa on number of identicals listed. 4/ The number of identicals listed in New Mexico decreased from 122 in 1937 to 101 in 1938.
5/ The number of identicals listed in Arizona increased from 65 in 1937 to 158 in 1938. 6/ Excluding Wisconsin and Iowa.

I wrote to several of the fellows who had increased their returns most noticeably to find out how they did it. Some answered and some didn't but for the information of "whom it may concern" I have gathered together some of the ideas that have been successful in coaxing the shy little acreage cards from their haunts and luring them into the return mail bags. Many of the men sent in fine ideas and it is clear that getting increased Rural Carrier returns calls for more than wishful hoping.

GETTING PROPER DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE

Sending the same number of cards to every Rural Carrier in the State may result in a poor distribution of the sample. In counties having many large towns or cities there are usually more routes than in counties having only small villages. Sending a uniform number of cards to every carrier is likely to bring too many cards from the former and too few from the latter counties. This can be corrected partly by first setting up the quota desired from each county, based on the number of farms there. The number of cards to be sent to each carrier can then be determined in consideration of the number of routes and the number of cards needed for that county. It is doubtful if more than 20 cards should be sent to any one carrier. This procedure may not solve the problem entirely, but it helps. (I got this idea from Texas but it is probably in use in some other States).

In some counties there are not any rural routes --- or perhaps only a few. Here it becomes necessary to try some other means of getting distribution. One scheme which has been found to work fairly well is to send cards already stuffed and sealed with letters (Exhibit A), and return envelopes, to the Postmasters at small village offices where there are no routes. Along with these cards goes a letter asking the Postmaster to address them to representative farmers who get their mail at his office (Exhibit B). If the letter is worded right the cooperation of these rural Postmasters can usually be obtained and many of them will take pride in having their locality properly represented even though they have no rural routes. This scheme has been found to work quite well in Texas, North Dakota, Kentucky, Idaho and probably in other States.

If this idea is used in addition to direct mailings to individuals, the cards that are addressed (for each post office) should be sent in bulk with the ones that are unaddressed. The letter to the Postmaster should request him to address the blank envelopes to other farmers than those to whom you are addressing cards. This will help to prevent duplication.

Of course a further method of filling in the gaps where there are no rural routes is by use of individual mailings addressed directly to farmers. Most of the men do this to some extent and Dick Ross says this brings in the greater part of his returns, because he has very few rural routes in his State and he carries a large list of addressograph plates for this particular purpose.

It seldom pays to mail cards to farmers whose cards were "no good" the previous year. Weed them out and save time in editing, because a high percentage of them will be "no good" next time.

INCREASING PERCENT RETURNS

Various methods are being successfully used to increase percent returns and the following discussion is a composite of the ideas that have come from the different States. Fundamentally it boils down to:

- (1) Stimulating the cooperation and interest of the postmasters and carriers.
- (2) Helping carriers make a "follow-up".
- (3) Making additional "follow-up" by direct mail.

These will be discussed in order:

(1) Stimulating Interest: The first step in stimulating the interest of Postmasters and Carriers is to keep an accurate record of the returns from each route as the cards come in. This is easy if forms are prepared for the purpose beforehand and the cards checked as they are opened. At this time the number of the rural route should be inserted on any cards where it was omitted.

Different offices use this record in various ways, but one of the most effective is that adopted by Blood in Oklahoma. (He may have gotten the idea somewhere else, I don't know --- ask him). It is a variation from the scheme of sending the postmaster the record for his own carriers only. He prepares a mimeographed letter and fills it in for each postmaster (Exhibit C). It shows up those who returned their cards the previous year, and tends to "pep up" the ones who did not. Blood says this is a hot idea, and that since he adopted it he has received a number of letters from postmasters apologizing for their showings. They do not like to be advertised as not doing as well as other postmasters in their county. At first this looked to me like a pretty big job to fix up all these letters. I asked Miss Zeigler about it, though, (she is the attractive and efficient Head Clerk in the Oklahoma office), and she said it only takes a day or so to fill in the letters. They just go through the record book and fill in as many carbons for each county as there are postoffices, and then fill in the individual addresses. Furthermore this can be done any time between one autumn and the next. These letters are nailed out a week or two before the cards are sent.

Along with the cards goes another letter to the postmasters and in many States a separate letter to the carriers. It has been found well also to enclose a form for each carrier on which he can keep a list of the patrons with whom he leaves cards. Childs, in Texas, combines this form with a letter to them. (Exhibit D) This gives them the information necessary for a follow-up later.

Right here is a chance to prevent conflict and duplications in making direct mailings from the office. Some men address cards by mail to all who answered the previous year. This tends to blanket the personal work of the carriers because it covers many of the farms where they were going to leave cards. The carriers rightly resent this if they find it out, and if they don't find it out, a lot of duplicate cards will likely be returned. If we expect the carriers to cooperate with us, we should also cooperate with them. Some of the fellows wait until most of the cards are in before making the direct-mail follow-up. This is much better but causes considerable delay in getting the last returns.

One way to help the carriers and ourselves at the same time is to fill in on each carrier's record sheet the names of his patrons who reported the previous year. The sheets for the following year could be listed more easily as the cards come in, but this work could be done at any time. By asking each carrier to make a special effort to get cards from the patrons listed (if they are still on his route), and as many more as is decided on, much duplication and delay will be avoided, and the direct mail follow-up from the office will be reduced to a minimum.

(2) The Carrier's Follow-up: A week or so after the cards are sent out, another letter is sent to the postmasters enclosing "reminder slips" (Exhibit E) for use by the carriers in making a follow-up. Some fellows send a few more cards with this letter to take the place of any that may have been lost.

A week or so after this, a final "clean-up" letter is sent to the postmasters (Exhibits F and G) to get in any cards that may be lying around loose.

(3) The Direct Mail Follow-up: The follow-up from the office has two different phases. One (a) is to obtain missing items for incomplete cards (usually "Total Acres in Farm"), and the other (b) is to obtain more cards for identical listings. It goes without saying that this work takes time, and also delays the listings, but some of it is usually necessary to get a big enough return.

(a) Writing back for additional information from the reporter is done by some of the fellows by use of a suitably worded set of addressograph plates, stamping the request on a blank card. These cards are sent with return envelopes. Of course, they could be mimeographed. Other Statists send back the acreage cards themselves, with suitable notations about the missing items. You may lose some of the cards by doing this, but the ones you lose couldn't have been used anyway. Sending the acreage card back does make clear what you are talking about, and will probably educate the man to fill it out better next time. Personally, I favor the latter scheme.

(b) The direct mail follow-up to get more cards for matching is usually done two or three weeks after the cards are first sent to the carriers. These requests, of course, go to the folks who reported the previous year, but whose cards are not in for the current year. In making this second request, be sure and send another blank card - they likely lost the first one. Some fellows stamp this "Second Request" (get a rubber stamp from Bill Evans), and a brief, friendly enclosure slip seems better than a letter to go with it.

Ben Kienholz, in North Dakota, sent out a "Third Request" last fall, and said it brought in a lot more cards than the second one did. He isn't sure why, but thinks it may have been either because they got scared, or were proud Ben was so anxious to hear from them. (I'll bet some of them just got tired being pestered and thought that was the only way to shake Ben off!)

ELIMINATING LOST MOTION

- Increasing efficiency (whether you call it holding down costs or speeding up the work) calls for careful study, because there is no one place to do it. Those offices where costs per schedule are lowest plan

the work carefully all along the line to avoid unnecessary motions, and do the job in the easiest way possible. I can't cover the whole subject, but shall merely pass on a few ideas that may help.

Duplicate Reports: Duplicate reports always cause trouble. The repeated requests irritate the farmer, and eliminating the duplicate figures slows down our work ("increasing costs", says the old Scotchman). The only way to avoid getting duplicates is to prevent it by the manner of sending out the cards. I have already touched on this in two or three places.

Editing: In some offices all the editing is done by the professional men; in other offices some of the clerks have been trained so they can do a considerable part of the routine editing. Wherever there are clerks who can be taught to help with this part of the work, the job goes along faster and easier.

In some offices the first step after the cards are "checked in" is to have comptometer operator add the total crop acres on each card. This makes editing much easier and faster.

Arranging the Cards: For readily matching identicals, it is essential that the previous year's cards be conveniently arranged beforehand. The usual method is to have them alphabetically by counties.

Listing: In most offices the "non-identicals" are listed first, then the "identicals". Floyd, in Georgia, found that by starting with the tabulation of identicals he was able to bring forward "Total Land" figures from the previous year, in many cases, without sending the cards back for the information.

I have noticed that listing is done in ink in some offices. Pencils speed up the work, but they should be at least as hard as No. 3; many clerks like No. 2 pencils, but they should not be used for listing, as the figures smear too badly.

* * * * *

Hal Bryant, in "Old Kaintuck", uses addressograph plates to tell his follow-up messages. He stamps the message on a copy of the letter from the Postmaster-General to strengthen the idea that the work is really required. He says it does the job nicely.

* * * * *

Running the "reminder slips" on tinted paper, instead of white, seems to be a good idea. Several of the fellows do that.

* * * * *

Harley Brewer, in West Virginia, proposed sending cards already sealed with return envelopes, and addressed to the folks who reported the previous year on each route, to each carrier in bulk, with enough more blank cards to fill his quota. This is to be accompanied by a suitable letter asking that the blank cards be left with other patrons. George Scott does this in California and it looks like a good idea, but it seems to me it would be better to send only a list of the names, instead of sealed envelopes. The carriers have no further interest in sealed letters after they have been delivered, whereas they will follow up on cards that they have left to be returned to them.

We are mailing three copies of this to each office. If you want more (or less!) let us know. We want everybody in each field office to have a chance to read these "Notes".

Also send me any ideas y'all may have for the good of the order. The next issue will probably feature either the "General Schedules" or "January Livestock Survey", but suggestions along any line will be welcome. I want to thank all the fellows who sent in the ideas for this first edition, whether I mentioned them by name, or not.

Yours

Mac

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Division of Agricultural Statistics
Box 1057 - Austin, Texas - September 1939

Exhibit A

Dear Sir; I am enclosing a copy of the crop acreage card which is being distributed this year by the rural carriers to secure information concerning the acreage of crops harvested.

Your locality is not served by a rural carrier; however, I am very anxious to secure as many reports as possible this year from farmers in each section. It is important that your locality be represented in the survey for the State. Will you therefore, kindly fill out the enclosed card and return it to me at once in the enclosed envelope, which requires no postage? IF YOU HAVE ALREADY RETURNED ONE OF THESE CARDS, PLEASE HAND THIS ONE TO A NEIGHBOR AND ASK HIM TO REPORT FOR HIS FARM.

V. C. Childs,
Senior Agricultural Statistician

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
Division of Agricultural Statistics
Sacramento, California
P. O. Box 1205

Exhibit B

September, 1939

To the POSTMASTER:

Dear Sir:

During the past several seasons, the Post Office Department has cooperated with the Department of Agriculture in making crop acreage surveys, by the distribution of individual survey cards through Rural Carriers. In several states, including California, there are many farming communities which are not served by carriers. Hence, the Department is requesting Postmasters in other rural localities to lend their assistance in this acreage survey. Only by this means can such a survey be representative in this State.

I am sending you, in unaddressed envelopes, several of these acreage survey cards, enclosed with a return envelope. Will you kindly address and deliver these to farmer-patrons of your office, in addition to those directly addressed and mentioned in the next paragraph. Instructions to farmers are printed on each card.

In order to get the maximum number of returns from farmers who reported last year, we have addressed cards to them and are enclosing these herewith to be distributed by you.

The Department will greatly appreciate your assistance in this matter, as we are anxious that returns from your community be included in the survey.

The completeness and accuracy of both Acreage and Livestock Survey reports made in recent years are largely due to the earnest efforts and cooperation of Postmasters and Rural Carriers, and we trust you will again lend your valued assistance to this project.

Yours very truly,

GEO. A. SCOTT
Sr. Agricultural Statistician, In Charge

DISTRIBUTE PREFERABLY TO
GROWERS OF FIELD AND
HAY CROPS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
318 Federal Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Sept. , 1939

Exhibit C

Postmaster,
 , Oklahoma

Dear Sir:

You will be interested in the table below which shows the number of 1937 Acreage cards returned by the rural carriers in your office last September, as well as those in other towns in your county. Since the Carriers will also be interested in this table will you please circulate this letter among them.

Quite a number of rural carriers over the State secured the return of all fifteen cards sent them, which was very much appreciated. We do not expect all carriers to do this, but we desire a return of at least seven cards from each rural route.

Within two weeks we will distribute supplies for the 1939 Acreage Survey, and we will be grateful for your cooperation in securing a large return on this survey.

Very truly yours,

K. D. Blood,
Agricultural Statistician.

_____ County

<u>Town</u>	<u>Rural Route No.</u>	<u>Cards Returned</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Rural Route No.</u>	<u>Cards Returned</u>
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Office of the Agricultural Statistician
Box 1057 - Austin, Texas

Exhibit D

September 1939

To Rural Carriers:

The form below is provided for your convenience in listing the names of patrons to whom you deliver the fall acreage cards, and for checking those who return the filled in cards to you. Within about ten days time, we shall supply you with reminder slips to be put in the boxes of those who have not returned their cards.

We sincerely thank you for the cooperation which you have given us in the past.

Very truly yours,

V. C. Childs,
Sr. Agricultural Statistician

	NAME OF PATRON	CARD RETURNED		NAME OF PATRON	CARD RETURNED
1			11		
2			12		
3			13		
4			14		
5			15		
6			16		
7			17		
8			18		
9			19		
10			20		

Samples of Reminder Slips

Exhibit E

(Oklahoma)

Dear Patron:

Will you kindly fill out the acreage card left in your box several days ago, and return it at once, so that I may forward it to the U. S. Department of Agriculture as soon as possible.

Your Rural Carrier

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT IN COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(Alabama)

ACREAGE SURVEY REMINDER

Recently the mail carrier left in your mail box an ACREAGE SURVEY CARD of the United States Department of Agriculture. Many of the cards have been returned, this reminder being intended for those who have not returned the card as yet. If you have not already filled out this card and returned it to your mail box, it will be greatly appreciated if you will do so today or tomorrow since the cards to be of help in this year's survey must be forwarded within the next few days.

POSTOFFICE DEPARTMENT IN COOPERATION WITH THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(Louisiana)

A C R E A G E S U R V E Y R E M I N D E R

Dear Patron:

Recently I left in your mail box an Acreage Survey Card of the United States Department of Agriculture. Many cards have been returned, but my record indicates that you have not returned yours yet.

The Postoffice Department is desirous of cooperating to the fullest extent with the Department of Agriculture in making its annual acreage survey, and I am particularly hopeful that sufficient cards will be received from this route for it to be properly represented in the State totals.

If my record is correct and you have not yet returned your card, it will be greatly appreciated if you will do so today or tomorrow. The cards must be forwarded within the next few days if they are to be of help in this year's survey.

Very truly yours,

Rural Carrier

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
318 Federal Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
October, 1939

Exhibit F

TO THE POSTMASTER:

Dear Sir:

On September 17 supplies were distributed for the 1939 Acreage Survey. Many of these cards have already been returned to us by postmasters and rural carriers over the State, but as we must close our report soon after October 10, we should appreciate that each carrier in your office be reminded to collect all available cards and forward them to us within the next few days.

We also wish to take this opportunity to thank you and the rural carriers operating out of your office for the valuable assistance rendered on the three surveys made each year by the Department of Agriculture with the cooperation of the Post Office Department. It is not our intention that rural carriers be caused an undue amount of work in securing the return of these cards, but where they can conveniently do so it increases the accuracy of our State report and is greatly appreciated.

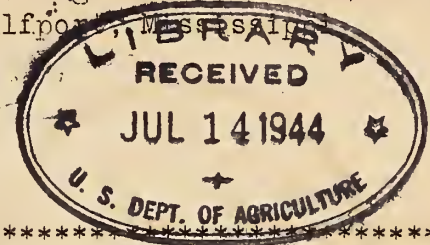
Each farmer filling out and returning a card is sent a copy of the resulting report as soon as it is released, but should you desire any additional copies, please let us know. Any late cards should be forwarded immediately, and even though they may be received too late to be of use in the survey, reports will be mailed to the farmers sending them in.

One of our return envelopes is enclosed, in case you should have need for it.

Very truly yours,

K. D. Blood,
Agricultural Statistician

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Division of Agricultural Statistics
Gulfport, Mississippi



1.9-12
A8M24
cop. 2

Mac's Field Notes

Number 2

February, 1940

M O R E N O T E S

The first issue of "Field Notes" brought back some interesting replies, and a few back-fires. The general response seemed favorable, though, so here goes for another copy.

There is no intention to make this anything more than the name implies --- "notes". The contents are not official instructions, because those come from Washington. The ideas we give are all meant to be helpful, especially in our field offices, but it will be entirely with the readers to decide whether or not to adopt them.

Some of the ideas will be old stuff in many offices --- certainly in those where we pick them up. If you find any like that just pat yourself on the back for being out in front. If you have any improvements on any of them, by all means send them in so we can pass them on. In each issue will be included some original findings or studies of one kind or another, so even the wise guys will usually find something of interest (we hope).

Some items will be of minor importance, and may seem hardly worth mentioning, but sometimes it is these small things that cause the most trouble. It takes only a few small pieces of grit to stop an automobile, if they get in the wrong place. After all, efficiency seems usually to be the cumulative result of a lot of small improvements rather than coming from some one big brilliant idea.

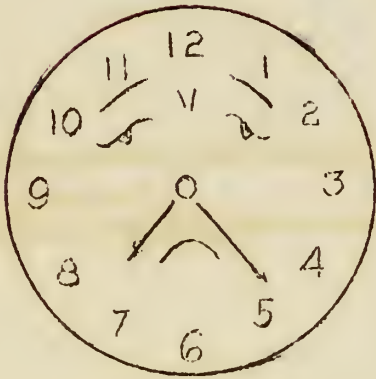
T H E E D I T O R I A L " W E "

In writing notes like these one sometimes has to refer to the writer. In fact, in looking over the rough draft it was plumb irritating to see the pronoun of the first-person-singular bobbing up so often! It had always seemed funny for an editor to speak of himself as "we" instead of "I", but the reason becomes apparent --- that word "I" looks so blamed bold and conceited! "We" just naturally looks a little more impersonal --- kinda yanks the writer down off his high perch and puts him in with the rest of the folks.

So from now on "we" shall try to keep "I" out of sight! (If "we" happen to slip some time, please be charitable; this kind of journalism is a new game for "us").

- 2 -
O V E R T I M E

This is a painful subject, and so it might be well to get it out of the way.



Chas. Schwab, the brilliant executive in the steel industry, said he expected every employee to be willing to work overtime in an emergency, but that whenever overtime became a regular practice he became suspicious. He figured that large amounts of overtime indicated either (1) that the employee was not competent to do a day's work in regular hours, or (2) that the persons supervising the work didn't have it properly organized.

We don't have to agree with Mr. Schwab, but he was recognized as an outstanding executive, and his idea on overtime may have something in it. In any case, we figured up the overtime reported from each field office from July, 1938 to June, 1939, and the data are shown on the following charts.

The overtime of professional employees is shown separately from that of clerical employees, for several reasons. Professional employees usually have more control over their own overtime than do the clerical employees. Furthermore, in some cases a large part of the professional overtime is accumulated on field trips, and represents the employee's desire to finish the trip and get back to the office. Practically all the clerical overtime, however, is office work made necessary by a piling up of routine activities.

Of course, if an office simply has too few people to do the required work, more overtime is to be expected. For that reason we have shown the average number of employees in each office during the period, as well as the total overtime. Totals of all part-time workers were computed into equivalent full-time employees.

It is interesting to note that some of the offices showing the least overtime are those with the fewest employees. One would naturally expect that the least overtime would show up where there were the most folks to do the work, but --- well, look for yourself.

Folks who make a habit of working overtime seldom accomplish any more than those who work at full speed during regular hours. The old law of diminishing returns sets in, and the body and mind merely slow down and do about the same amount of work over a longer period of time. Our folks are generally good workers, and the regular work can usually be arranged to avoid clerical overtime if it is properly planned well in advance. This responsibility rests mainly on the Statisticians and Head Clerks, and the elimination of clerical overtime is a goal well worth working for.

Three cheers for the offices where clerical overtime has been wiped out!

by CLERICAL Employees

STATE	Ave. No. Employees	Average number of clerical employees	Number of Hours	Total hours overtime worked by clerical employees July, 1938 - June 1939
N. Eng.	6.7	TTT- - - - -	55	
N. Y.	13.9	TTT- - - - -	96	
N. J.	2.4	TTT+ - - - -	20	
Pa.	6.0	TTT- - - - -	57	
Ohio	5.7	TTT- - - - -	159	
Ind.	8.5	TTT- - - - -	95	
Ill.	12.0	TTT- - - - -	510	
Mich.	7.5	TTT- - - - -	3	
Wis.	13.7	TTT- - - - -	0	
Minn.	9.0	TTT- - - - -	0	
Iowa	6.0	TTT- - - - -	129	
Mo.	5.2	TTT- - - - -	33	
N. Dak.	3.2	TTT- - - - -	50	
S. Dak.	6.5	TTT- - - - -	52	
Nebr.	7.3	TTT- - - - -	569	
Kans.	6.8	TTT- - - - -	300	
Del.-Md.	4.0	TTT- - - - -	3	
Va.	3.5	TTT- - - - -	35	
W. Va.	5.2	TTT- - - - -	152	
N. C.	10.4	TTT- - - - -	600	
S. C.	2.6	TTT- - - - -	16	
Ga.	4.2	TTT- - - - -	86	
Fla.	4.0	TTT- - - - -	4	
Ky.	4.6	TTT- - - - -	270	
Tenn.	4.7	TTT- - - - -	375	
Ala.	4.3	TTT- - - - -	217	
Miss.	4.0	TTT- - - - -	276	
Ark.	4.0	TTT- - - - -	481	
La.	4.3	TTT- - - - -	263	
Okla.	4.7	TTT- - - - -	3	
Texas	10.2	TTT- - - - -	881	
Mont.	2.5	TTT+ - - - -	0	
Idaho	2.4	TTT+ - - - -	204	
Wyo.	1.8	TTT- - - - -	38	
Colo.	5.0	TTT- - - - -	0	
N. Mex.	3.4	TTT+ - - - -	0	
Ariz.	1.4	TTT+ - - - -	238	
Utah-Nev.	2.5	TTT+ - - - -	0	
Wash.-Ore.	6.7	TTT- - - - -	32	
Calif.	9.9	TTT- - - - -	136	
U. S. Total	230.7			6,623

by PROFESSIONAL Employees

STATE	Ave. No. Employees	Average number of professional employees	Number of Hours	Total hours overtime worked by professional employees July, 1938 - June, 1939					
				100	200	300	400	500	1000
N. Eng.	2.0	0 0	168	100					
N. Y.	3.0	0 0 0 0	263	100	100				
N. J.	1.6	0 0 0 0 -	21						
Pa.	2.0	0 0 0 0	85	100					
Ohio	2.6	0 0 0 0 0 -	567	100	100	100			
Ind.	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	474	100	100	100			
Ill.	4.2	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 +	1,111	100	100	100	100	100	
Mich.	3.3	0 0 0 0 0 0 +	131	100					
Wis.	3.0	0 0 0 0 0	0						
Minn.	2.0	0 0 0 0	7						
Iowa	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	464	100	100				
Mo.	1.9	0 0 0 0 -	243	100					
N. Dak	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	96	100					
S. Dak	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	263	100					
Nebr.	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	994	100	100	100	100	100	
Kans.	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	260	100					
Del.-Md.	1.9	0 0 0 -	10						
Va.	3.0	0 0 0 0	471	100	100				
W. Va.	1.6	0 0 0 -	231	100					
N. C.	5.0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0	734	100	100	100			
S. C.	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	238	100					
Ga.	2.0	0 0 0 0 0	87	100					
Fla.	3.0	0 0 0 0	70	100					
Ky.	2.0	0 0 0	447	100	100				
Tenn.	2.0	0 0 0	376	100	100				
Ala.	2.2	0 0 0 +	234	100					
Miss.	2.2	0 0 0 +	353	100	100				
Ark.	2.9	0 0 0 0 -	1,103	100	100	100	100	100	
La.	2.0	0 0 0	216	100					
Okla.	2.0	0 0 0	103	100					
Texas	4.0	0 0 0 0 0	1,320	100	100	100	100	100	
Mont.	2.0	0 0	0						
Idaho	2.0	0 0	195	100					
Wyo.	1.5	0 0 +	172	100					
Colo.	2.2	0 0 0 +	0						
N. Mex.	1.0	0	0						
Ariz.	2.0	0 0	275	100					
Utah-Nev.	2.0	0 0	0						
Wash.-Ore.	5.1	0 0 0 0 0 0 +	1,145	100	100	100	100	100	
Calif.	6.8	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 -	2,450	100	100	100	100	100	
U. S. Total	100.0		15,242						

GETTING PRICE REPORTERS



If you have plenty of good price reporters, and don't need any more, just skip this.

If you are in with the majority of the States, though, you will be interested in a hot idea along this line that has been used very successfully by Virgil Childs, "Down Mexico Way" --- (well, not quite, but right next to it).

Childs thought it was too bad to let a month go by without sending a schedule to his Texas Cotton Reporters. Looked like he was

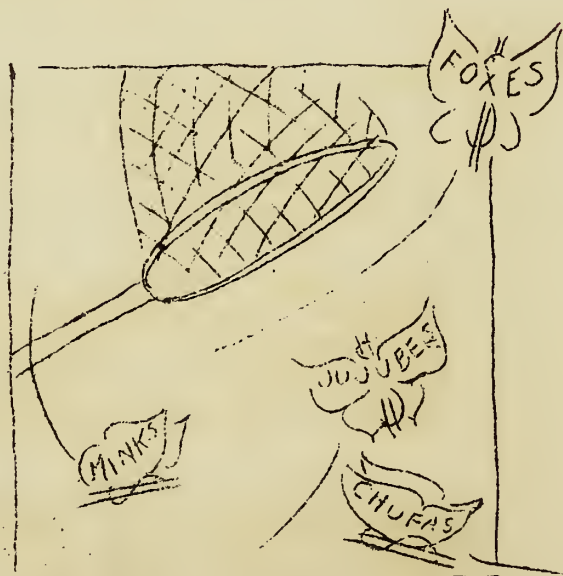
neglecting them. So last January (1939) he fixed up a special schedule which is copied on the opposite page, asking for the names and addresses of dealers in farm products. (For the information of Yankee readers, there is no Cotton schedule in January). Sent it out with the "Agricultural Situation". Compared with a Cotton Schedule this was so easy to answer that they came back in a regular swarm, loaded with names and addresses!

A reserve list like this is almost ideal as a source of price reporters. Each name is a bona fide dealer in farm products, and they are already classified by kinds of products handled. In States where there is no Cotton list, the same idea could be used with any other list of farmers, being best, of course, in a month when they are not getting another schedule.

THOSE CENSUS PRICES

In looking for Census price data in Ole Miss, Heidelberg hit pay dirt in an unexpected place. He even found a farmer selling quail --- although it's against the law to sell them here!

His lucky strike came from studying the "Market Bulletin" put out by the State Department of Agriculture. It is a kind of classified ad sheet published every month in which farmers can list farm products for sale. Lots of other States put them out, too.



By checking through a complete file of them for 1939 Heidelberg found some folks actually selling some of those strange and curious items on the Census list. He also got a lot of price quotations by months, that he can use as a last resort if he can't get enough replies to mailed inquiries. Not bad, not bad!

*Here is the
schedule that
Childs used
in Texas*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Division of Agricultural Statistics
Box 1057 - Austin, Texas - January 25, 1939

Dear Reporter:

Your copy of the January "Agricultural Situation" is enclosed. We do not have a regular cotton inquiry this month, but we have another job on which we would like to have your assistance if it is convenient. To assist us in our price work, we need the names of several dealers in each locality who buy or handle farm products. Dealers in any farm products (field crops of any kind, livestock, poultry, livestock products, dairy products, fruit, etc.) are desired. It will be appreciated if you will list the names and addresses of any dealers in farm products known to you and return the list to us in the enclosed envelope which requires no postage.

Respectfully,

V. C. Childs,
Sr. Agricultural Statistician

NAMES	ADDRESSES	FARM PRODUCTS HANDLED

Submitted by:

NAME _____ POST OFFICE _____ R.D. _____

COUNTY _____

T E X A S

1/24/39

THE SITUATION IN HAND

In most field offices the job of folding the Agricultural Situation is a pain in the neck (am I telling you!) John Button, who presides over the mailing room in the Kentucky office, has found a way to fold them on the small No. 58 Multigraph folder, by adjusting the machine in a certain manner.

The Situations have to be placed in the machine in a certain way, and I have tried to draw a diagram of the method, for whom it may concern.

It takes some little time and patience to make the necessary adjustments, and after the machine is set for this job it is out of adjustment for anything else. In Louisville we plan to try using the old No. 58 machine for this job only, getting a new machine of a different type for all other folding jobs:

That may be the answer to this troublesome problem --- we hope so. Unfortunately we have been unable to find a folding machine at a reasonable price that will fold the Situation satisfactorily, and also handle all our other folding jobs.

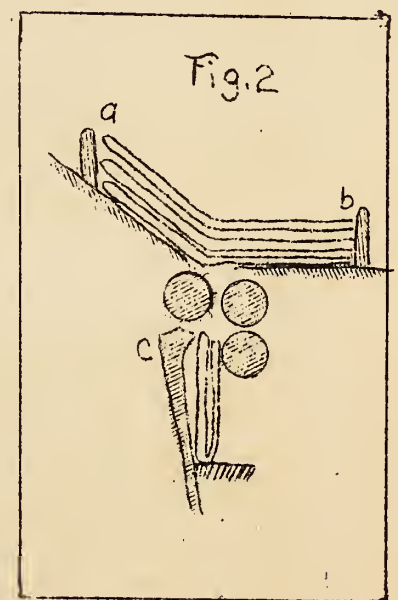
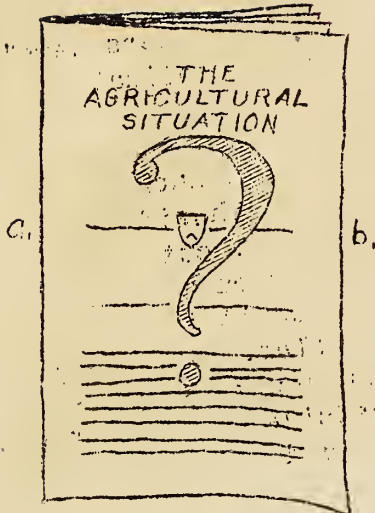
Referring to the diagram, the system Button uses is as follows: Put the Situations on the machine with side "a" to the back, and adjust the pile so that side "a" extends a little beyond side "b" after being folded down the middle.

Then adjust the machine so that the creaser "c" just catches the edge enough to start it through the rollers without making an additional crease (Figure 2).

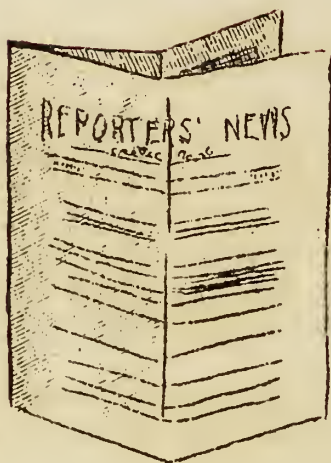
To do satisfactory work the rubber rollers must be kept reasonable clean, and must be renewed when they get worn. If the spring on the creaser "c" gets weak it may be necessary to get a stronger one.

Our personal experience with the No. 58 folder has caused the loss of a lot of religion, but the machine at Louisville seems to be doing this particular job O. K. Maybe this one machine is unique in some way (anyhow, it had to be Buttoned-up) but they say it does the work like a charm.

If anybody else tries this method, please let us know how it works out. This folding job is a hard nut to crack, and it is very doubtful if any ordinary folder would handle the large special edition that came out in November.



H O T N E W S



Did you see the new "Reporters News" for price reporters in North Carolina? It's a honey!

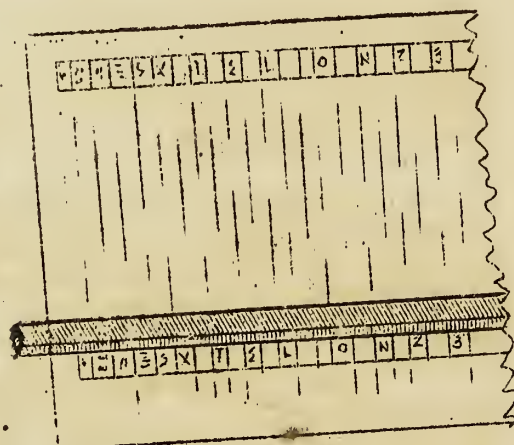
Instead of using the old hackneyed form of going straight down both sides of a long mimeographed sheet, they cut the stencils lengthwise (probably on a long-carriage typewriter) and made it into a nifty little four-page leaflet. It's lots easier to read, and looks much more interesting than the regular broadside style. Whoever designed the make-up did a jam-up good job.

If you didn't get a copy you'd better write for one. It has a well-pointed squib in it that would come in handy for News Letters in some other States --- and it isn't copyrighted!

A H E L P I N L I S T I N G

In listing long schedules, like acreage or livestock cards, it often is hard to post the figures in the right columns. The difficulty increases as one gets down the page, away from the headings.

John Button, in the Kentucky office, makes the work easier by cutting off one of the headings and fastening it to a long ruler, with Scotch tape. By moving the ruler down the page occasionally, he always has the heading close to where he is listing.



Looks like a good idea --- makes two for him in this issue. If he hadn't told about them we couldn't have passed them on --- what about that good idea you had?

M A I L I N G R O O M S

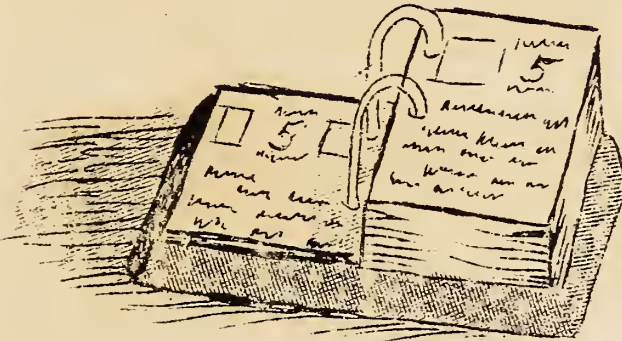
In glancing about we have been especially impressed by the neatness of the mailing rooms in the Oklahoma and Arkansas offices. "Some Mailing Rooms We Have Seen" might well be the title of a dirty story, but these two seem to stand out in memory as being exceptional. No papers on the floor or tables ---no dirty rags lying around --- no empty boxes or supplies scattered about --- all the machines covered up when not in use ---and even the Mimeograph machines clean of ink and fuzz! The arrangement of machines and supplies was neat and orderly --- in fact, it actually looked as though white folks worked there!

The Oklahoma City office is presided over by Wilson Woodrow (no,

the name is not reversed), and in the Little Rock office the honors go to Richard Grant (although Richard has now moved out into the front office).

Of course, we haven't seen all the mailing rooms yet, and in our further ramblings we hope to find some more like these two.

A N O F F I C E D I A R Y



Mrs. Thompson, Head Clerk in the Arkansas office, uses her desk calendar pad in a way that helps keep the work of that office running smoothly.

From day to day she enters on the pad brief notations of what was done in the office. She notes here the days when extra help was necessary, and if possible records ideas about how the work could be handled easier next time. She does this while it is fresh in her mind.

By planning far enough in advance it often is possible to smooth out peak loads of work, and to prevent critical situations from building up. Things that will need attention later on can be posted on the pad several weeks, or even months ahead, so they will not be overlooked when the right time comes to do them. Mrs. Thompson finds that reference to her pad for the previous year helps her to do this.

It would seem that keeping such an office diary would be a help in any office. Even if the Head Clerk can keep all the details in mind, and plan all work without reference to past records, it is always possible that somebody else may have to take over this responsibility some time. In such a case the record for the previous year would be invaluable.

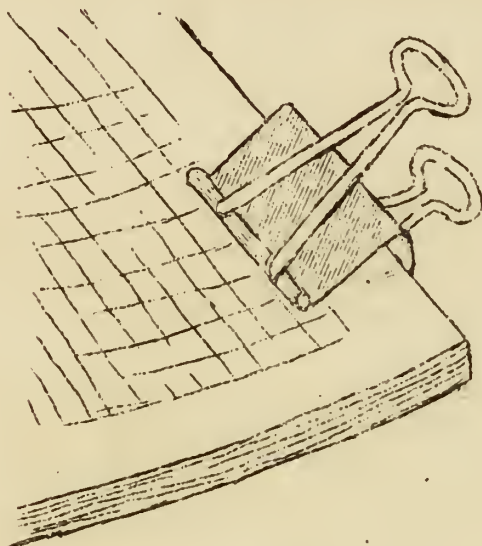
It might also make it easier for the Head Clerk to get a vacation without finding things in a mess when she gets back!

W H A T ' S I N A N A M E ?

In making "official" introductions some of the fellows seem to be in doubt about what title to hang onto the writer. This uncertainty is easy to understand, because "our" present position is rather a new job. High-sounding titles don't mean much, and among friends we always answer to "Mac", but this doesn't register much with strangers. If it becomes necessary to introduce me officially it will help if you designate me as "Regional Statistician for the Southern States".

THOSE MULTISTAMP OUTFITS

A number of field offices have recently been supplied with "Multistamp" outfits, for use in heading up listing sheets. Instructions were sent out explaining how to use the device for this purpose, but a few more ideas have developed that may be helpful.



The instructions stated that "it is a good idea to 'back up' the pile of sheets against a wall, or some other upright backstop, to keep them from being pushed away when the device is rocked forward". This is still a good idea, but is not always practicable, because there is not always a wall handy.

We have found that a couple of the spring type binder clips clamped on the back of the pile of sheets does the trick very nicely. (If you don't have any, write to Bill Evans for some; he's big-hearted and will be glad to fix you up.)

Simply turn each sheet back as it is printed, without loosening the clip. There may be a little back-printing, but usually this is not serious. It can be prevented, of course, by interleaving with loose sheets of old mimeograph paper.

In cutting the stencils for the headings there is no need to include the complete wording of each question exactly as it is on the schedule. Usually this would not be practicable with a typewriter. It is only necessary to word the headings so that the clerks can readily locate the proper column for each figure.

A complete copy of the schedule should be clipped (not pasted) to the top listing sheet when they are filed. It probably would be well to also clip a schedule to the summary sheet. This will provide a historic record of exactly how each question was worded, and what instructions and explanations were on the schedule.

Frank Parker has been using Multistamp equipment for 18 years and says it is O. K. He has sent in some suggestions that he has learned from experience. Frank warns against inking the pad too heavily, or leaving too much ink in it after using, because this will cause it to leak and make a mess. He says the ends of the ink pad should be blotted well each time before mounting a stencil, and that it is best to ink only the portion of the pad where the printing actually comes.

Frank also sent directions for putting three portions of a long heading on one stencil, one part below another. The first, second, and third portions are then printed simultaneously by properly "shingling" the blank sheets. We shall not describe the process yet, however, because it is a kind of post-graduate course to take after one has learned to use the device for simple printing.

I N D E X O F P R I C E S P A I D

"Eve" Jones recently sent down a manuscript of a bulletin on "Price Movements in South Dakota" which is rather unique.

The feature of this manuscript which should be especially valuable in some other States is the description of methods used in constructing a State index of prices paid. Many States are now publishing an index of prices received but in preparing an index of prices paid there are special problems to be considered.

"Eve" says: "We have heard that a number of the State offices are either working up indexes or contemplating the job at least on prices received. To be strictly comparable with National indexes, any State index should be computed and weighted in exactly the same manner. It was quite a task to learn the exact procedure followed by the Washington office, make up the outline of the project and get Mr. Hale's approval. Since this manuscript presents a rather detailed description of the methods which were approved by Mr. Hale, it occurred to us that other State offices might find it helpful".

Unfortunately only five copies of the manuscript are available, but Jones says: "If any of the State men care to borrow one of these copies we would be glad to loan it to them".

N O M I N A L P R I C E S

Speaking of prices paid reminds us of a conversation that took place in a Gulfport store operated by a native of Italy.

Lady Customer: "How much are eggs?"

Merchant: "Thirty-two cents".

Lady Customer: "Oh, that's too much. Down the street they only asked twenty-six cents.

Merchant: "Why you don't buy there, then?"

Lady Customer: "Oh, they were out".

Merchant: "Oh, they were o-u-t! Well, when I'm out I sell them for nineteen cents!"

* * * * *

We're out too, for this time. Y'all send in some more good ideas for another issue.

Mac

